58. Educational reforms.

REV. K. T. THOMAS KATHANAR (*Member, Nominated*) said that so far as elementary education was concerned, it was the duty of Government to see that private elementary schools received the same equipment, and the same conveniences as departmental schools. It was unsound in principle to hold that the grant-in-aid given by Government to a private school was so much help to the management, that it was the duty of the manager to make up all the rest and that it was his 'job' to provide suitable buildings, and find out competent teachers. Viewed in this light, the action of Government in increasing the pay of private vernacular school teachers by Re. 1 only while at the same time they enhanced the pay of departmental school teachers by Rs. 2 was difficult to justify. There should properly be no such disparity between the salaries of teachers in the two kinds of schools.

The following were certain other means whereby Government could afford an equal treatment to teachers in private vernacular schools. Arrangements could be made for the transfer of teachers from private schools to departmental schools according to certain definite rules. A Provident Fund could also be established for these teachers whether or not the managers contributed to it. In order to aid the managers themselves, periodical contributions should be made by Government towards the proper equipment of schools.

The same policy could be extended in some respects at least to secondary (English) schools. Funds for equipment of schools should be evenly distributed among private schools and departmental schools. A proportionate sum out of the allotment for pensions to departmental teachers should be released for a Provident Fund for teachers in private schools.

No time should be lost in appointing the education enquiry committee. Probably the terms of reference to the proposed committee might be settled at a conference of headmasters of High Schools and other men of light and leading.

Another subject which demanded immediate attention of Government was the need for helping the boarding homes attached to High Schools. Government were already spending large sums on the establishment and maintenance of hostels for college students; but they paid no heed to the welfare of boarding homes for High School boys. There were at present about 39 boarding homes, including both girls' and boys' institutions, in the State. None of these excepting a few orphanges received any contribution from Government. It was hoped that the department would soon devise a scheme for aiding and encouraging existing boarding houses and also for offering adequate inducement to the starting of new homes by private agencies.

Another reform that was necessary was that in the matter of equipment and coveniences Government should place vernacular schools on the same footing as English schools. There should be equality of treatment between the two. It was highly necessary that Government

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

should turn their attention to the improvement of the condition of the vernacular schools. If this was not feasible they should open a sufficient number of vernacular schools of a new type to which at least children who could aspire and afford to go for higher education could be sent.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Rev. Mr. Thomas Kathanar, in regard to the first point in your representation you want supplementary grants to be the same as equipment grants. One is supplementary, the other is original. Therefore there is really no ground for comparison between the two.

Another important matter you touched upon is Government grants to boarding houses attached to High Schools. This raises an important question of policy. One can understand hostels and boarding houses being either provided or encouraged in association with colleges. Of course, in the colleges, students are drawn from far afield, from all over the country long distances away from their homes and therefore it is necessary that Government should foster hostels and boarding houses in connection with colleges. In the case of High Schools that consideration is not so important, for High Schools are so well distributed all over the State that they are within daily reach of the homes of the pupils who attend and if your suggestion is accepted as a measure of policy, then all High Schools should be encouraged to have boarding houses or hostels attached to them and that will mean that the pupils will be drawn away from localities where there are High Schools to other High Schools simply because one High school is better than another. That will result in unfair competition which may react on High School education throughout the country. Although the matter will be considered I would not advise you to be too hopeful on the subject.

Then the last point you touched upon was the equal treatment to be accorded to English and vernacular schools in the matter of providing sites, buildings and equipment and fixing salaries of teachers. The two are necessarily different, education in vernacular schools and education in English schools, and when the number of vernacular schools is so very numerous, if we put them on the same footing — vernacular schools being for a large part primary schools—the expenses will be so tremendous that it will overwhelm the possibilities of the State for the time being. And it may be inevitable to levy an educational cess if your suggestion is to be carried out, and that I suppose, you will be the first to oppose.

The Assembly adjourned at 4-30 P. M. to re-assemble at 11-30 A. M. the next day.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly